



What the 10(j) Wolf Management Rules Means for Livestock Producers and Dog Owners

Wolves were reintroduced into central Idaho in 1995 and 1996 by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as an “experimental non-essential population” under Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Since that time, wolves have increased in numbers until the USFWS proposed delisting wolves from the ESA protections in early 2003. Due to legal challenges and other delays, delisting may take several years. As an interim measure until wolves are delisted, the USFWS proposed making changes to the way wolves were managed under Section 10(j), by making the rule more flexible for livestock operators and dog owners. On February 7, 2005, the new 10(j) rule came into effect in Idaho south of Interstate 90, and in parts of Montana.

Under this new rule livestock is defined as cattle, sheep, horses, domestic bison, mules, goats, llamas, donkeys, and dogs that are actively being used to guard or herd domestic animals. Wolves are still considered ‘threatened’ under the ESA, but the implementation of the new 10(j) rule gave more flexibility to control wolves attacking, molesting, harassing, and injuring domestic livestock and dogs.



Photo by Jason Husseman

Private Land

Under this rule private land is defined as any land not owned by the federal government. This includes state and tribal lands. Wolves on private land can be harassed at any time. Wolves seen attacking,

biting, chasing, molesting, harassing livestock, livestock herding and guarding animals, and dogs on private land can be shot by the landowners without prior written authorization. The carcass of any wolf taken and the area surrounding it should not be disturbed. It must be reported within 24 hours and there must be evidence of a wolf attack such as dead or wounded livestock, trampled vegetation, and mixed wolf and livestock sign. An ‘attack’ means that livestock and dogs are in immediate danger of being wounded or killed. A wolf feeding on a carcass does not qualify as attacking under this rule. If you believe wolves on your property are a potential threat to livestock or pets you can apply for a ‘shoot on sight’ permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Remember, if a wolf is killed under any circumstance, you must report the incident within 24 hours to the USFWS.

On private land the following individuals are authorized, in certain circumstances, to act immediately and without prior approval to protect livestock and pet dogs:

- The landowner and immediate family.
- The landowner’s employees, but only if they are employed to work on the land.
- Individuals who are legally using the land through financial agreements for livestock production or outfitting

Federal Land

Slightly different rules apply on federal land. Federal lands are those managed by agencies such as the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management. Only the following individuals may act to protect livestock on federal lands:

- Persons who have a valid federal land-use permit to use specific federal lands to graze livestock.
- Licensed outfitters who use livestock to operate their business and have a valid land-use permit.
- Paid employees of either of the above parties.

The individuals listed above may, without prior approval, kill a wolf in the act of attacking their livestock. They may not kill wolves attacking live-

stock owned by other parties. Again, the carcass of any wolf taken and the area surrounding it should not be disturbed because you must provide evidence that your animals were attacked. Remember, these rules apply only to livestock and dogs that guard or herd livestock.

- On federal land you may harass a wolf that poses an imminent danger to pet dogs but it is not legal to kill or injure the wolf. Pet dogs include hunting dogs and dogs used in an outfitting business.

Remember, it is legal to kill, wound, or harass a wolf in defense of human safety on any type of land. However, if a wolf is killed under any circumstance, you must report the incident within 24 hours to the USFWS.

Identifying Wolf Sign

Because wolves tend to travel the same trails that people do, wolf sign can often be found if wolves are nearby. The following will help you distinguish wolf sign from other animal sign:

Scat: Wolf droppings or "scat" can be distinguished from other canid scat based on size and content. Scat is generally 1-1½" in diameter with tapered ends. In contrast, coyote scat is much smaller (typically less than 1" in diameter). Wolf scat usually contains elk and deer hair, as well as shards of bones. Wolf "meat scats" are typically deposited after a fresh kill and are loose and tar-like in consistency.

Travel and tracks: Wolf tracks are generally much larger than dog tracks usually 3 ½ -4 inches wide by 4-5 inches long with distinct claw marks. When wolves are traveling, they usually are more "business like" than a dog and travel in a straight line, while dogs will meander back and forth. The distance between one set of wolf tracks and the next set is usually greater than 26 inches and likely more than 30. Also, wolves tend to have narrow chests, thus their tracks appear almost in a straight line. Mountain lion tracks in comparison will usually not have any claw marks, and tracks will appear rounder. A lion's stride is usually shorter than 26 inches, and because lions have broader chests, their tracks will not appear in a straight line. Also, when a pack of wolves are traveling together in the snow, they will often walk directly in each others tracks so leaving the appearance that only one animal has been there.

State Management

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has already begun the process of assuming wolf management authority. However, USFWS will have oversight of IDFG wolf management activities and IDFG, USFWS, the Nez Perce Tribe, and USDA Wildlife Services will continue to work cooperatively to meet the state's wolf management goals. Please use the contact information below to report wolf conflicts as well as wolf sightings:

Report wolf-livestock and dog injuries or deaths:

Wildlife Services: Toll Free 1-866-487-3297

To report an illegal wolf take:

Citizens Against Poaching: 1-800-632-5999

To report legal wolf take and wolf- dog interactions, :

Idaho Fish and Game Regional Offices at:

Headquarters 208-334-3700

Panhandle Region 208-769-1414

Clearwater Region 208-799-5010

Southwest Region 208-465-8465

McCall Subregion 208-634-8137

Magic Valley Region 208-324-4350

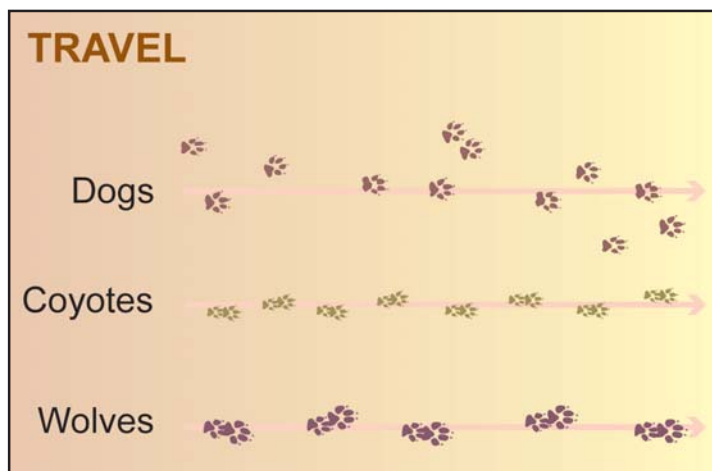
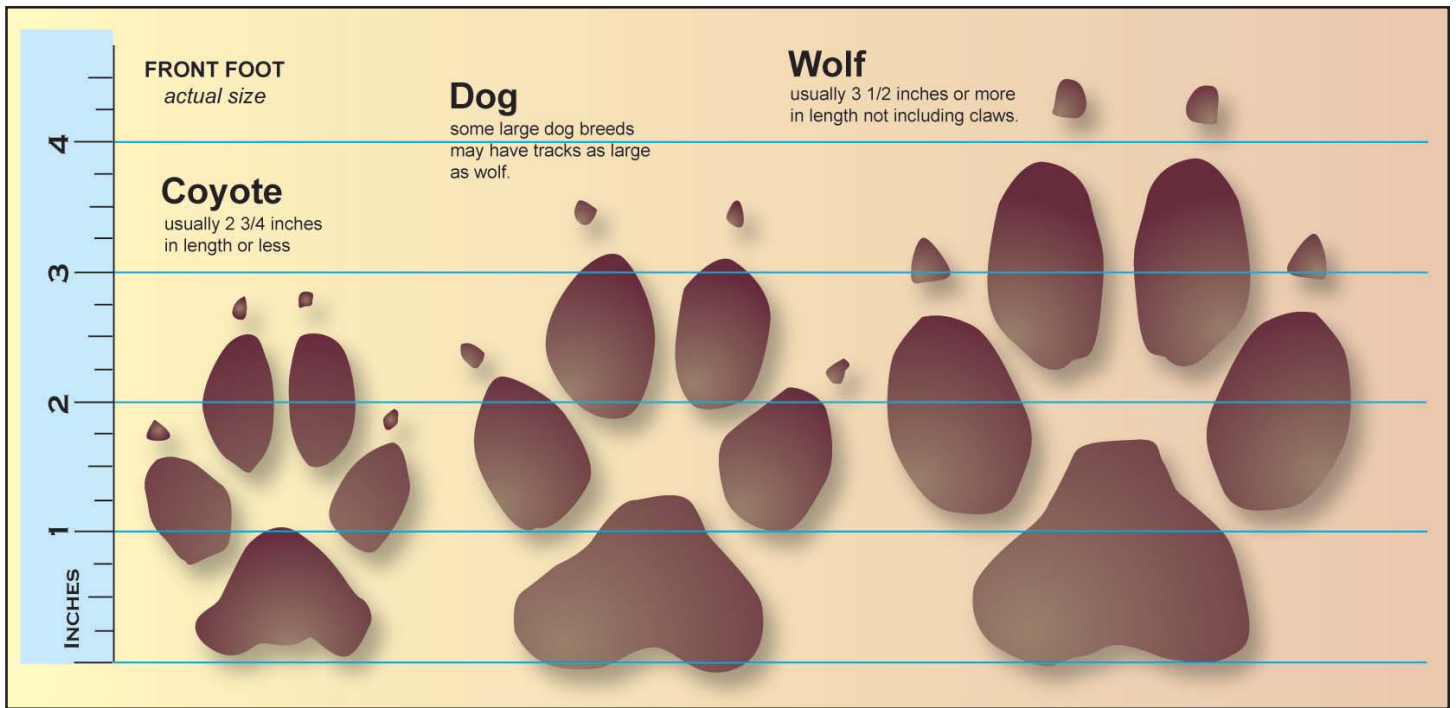
Southeast Region 208-232-4703

Upper Snake Region 208-525-7290

Salmon Region 208-756-2271

Please report all other wolf sightings on our online reporting form:

<http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/wildlife/wolves/report.cfm>



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